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Grieving Hinckley parents vow to stand behind son

By Eric Miller
Staff Writer of The News

EVERGREEN, Colo. — While residents of the small Colorado community of Evergreen reacted in total disbelief, the quiet couple who lives in the luxurious stone-and-wood 2-story house — parents of the man accused of shooting President Reagan — vowed Monday "to stand behind" their son.

In a statement from the parents of

John W. Hinckley Jr., read on the front porch by the family's attorney, the couple acknowledged their 25-year-old son recently had undergone psychiatric treatment.

Attorney Jim Robinson emerged from the rambling 2-story house, which had been cordoned off since the shooting, and told reporters Mr. and Mrs. John Hinckley were "grieved and heartbroken."

The senior Hinckley, chairman of

Vanderbilt Energy, a firm he moved from Dallas to Denver about six years ago, had been in his office earlier in the day when a company employee heard about the shooting over the radio and told him.

After arriving at the Hinckley home, set on a hill amid snow-covered trees, officers cordoned off the area, barring reporters and hundreds of curiosity seekers.

Shortly after FBI agents arrived,

the Hinckleys were moved to a neighbor's home after allowing investigators to search the house, neighbors said.

"John has been under recent psychiatric care," the Hinckleys' statement said. "His evaluation did not alert anyone to the seriousness of his condition."

"We are grieved and heartbroken by this tragedy . . . We love our son John and we will, of course, stand by

him. Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims and their loved ones," the statement read.

Reagan was struck in the chest, and press secretary James Brady was hit in the head. A Secret Service agent and a Washington policeman also were wounded in the shooting outside the Washington Hilton Hotel.

John Brazmore, one of the Hinckley's neighbors and golf partners at the nearby Hiwan Golf Club, de-

scribed the family as "very Christian people."

Pete Slabaugh, another neighbor and a vice president of Conoco Oil based in Denver, said he reacted with total disbelief when he heard of the shooting and thought, "It can't be the Hinckleys I know."

He said his wife spent the afternoon trying to comfort Mrs. Hinckley.

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